

CLAIMS

1. A method of controlling a transmission of telephonic voice message data from a sender having an origination voice message address to a potential recipient having a destination voice message address, the method comprising the steps of:

selectively providing by the potential recipient for storage in the telephonic voice message apparatus (10;40) a specified voice message transmission instruction for controlling transmission of telephonic voice message data directed to the destination voice message address;

directing the telephonic voice message data associated with the origination voice message address to the destination voice message address;

determining within the telephonic voice message apparatus (10;40) in response to the directing of telephonic voice message data to the destination voice message address whether the stored specified voice message transmission instruction for controlling transmission of the telephonic voice message data corresponds to the destination voice message address; and

upon determining that the specified voice message transmission instruction corresponds to the destination voice message address, processing the telephonic voice message data in accordance with the specified voice message transmission instruction.

2. The method of Claim 1 in which the telephonic voice message apparatus (40) includes first and second independently operable telephonic voice message systems (50,52) and in which the origination voice message address is associated with the first telephonic voice message system (50) and the destination voice message address is associated with the second telephonic voice message system (52).

3. The method of Claim 2 in which the telephonic voice message apparatus (40) further includes an interface node (60,62) that provides data communication between the first and second telephonic voice message systems (50,52), the interface node (60,62) co-operating with the first and second telephonic voice message systems (50,52) to determine whether the destination voice message address corresponds to a specified voice message transmission instruction for controlling transmission of the telephonic voice message data.
4. The method of Claim 3 in which directing the voice message data associated with the origination voice message address includes transmitting the destination voice message address from the first telephonic voice message system (50) to the interface node (60) and sending a query from the interface node (62) to the second telephonic voice message system (52) as to whether the destination voice message address corresponds to a specified voice message transmission instruction.
5. The method of any preceding claim, in which the specified voice message transmission instruction includes at least one of a predetermined set of voice message transmission instructions.
6. The method of any preceding claim, in which the voice message transmission instruction includes transmitting the telephonic voice message data to an alternative voice message destination having an alternative voice message address that is different from the destination voice message address.

7. The method of any preceding claim, in which the voice message transmission instruction includes determining whether the origination voice message address is included in a first pre-selected set of at least one acceptable origin address and thereafter transmitting the telephonic voice message data to the destination voice message address only if the origination voice message address is included in the first pre-selected set.

8. The method of any preceding claim, in which the voice message transmission instruction includes determining whether the origination voice message address is included in a pre-selected set of at least one unacceptable origin address and thereafter blocking transmission of the telephonic voice message data to the destination voice message address whenever the origination voice message address is included in the pre-selected set.

9. The method of any preceding claim, wherein the voice message transmission instruction (30) includes determining whether the origination voice message address is included in a pre-selected set of at least one address and thereafter assigning the voice message data a delivery priority for establishing priority for retrieval of the voice message data from the destination voice message address whenever the origination voice address is included in the pre-selected set.

10. The method of any preceding claim, in which the voice message transmission instruction includes prohibiting the voice message data from being copied or forwarded.

11. The method of any preceding claim, in which the telephonic voice message apparatus (10) includes a voice

recognition and conversion sub-system and the voice message transmission instruction includes converting the voice message data to electronic document data and delivering them to a selected electronic document system.

12. The method of Claim 11, in which the selected electronic document system includes an electronic mail system or a facsimile document system.

13. A method of controlling a transmission of telephonic voice message data in a telephonic voice message network sub-system from a first voice message network sub-system (50) associated with an origination voice message address and directed through a communication medium (64) of a voice message system network (54) to a second voice message network sub-system (52) associated with a destination voice message address, the method comprising the steps of:

selectively storing by the potential recipient in the second voice message network sub-system (52) a specified voice message transmission instruction for controlling transmission of telephonic voice message data directed to the destination voice message address;

directing from the first voice message network sub-system (50) telephonic voice message data for transmission through the communication medium (64) to the destination voice message address;

transmitting through the communication medium (64) from the first voice message network sub-system (50) to the second voice message network sub-system (52) the destination voice message address;

determining within the second voice message network sub-system (52) in response to the destination voice message address (58) whether the destination voice message

address corresponds to the stored specified voice message transmission instruction for controlling transmission of the telephonic voice message data; and

upon determining that the second voice message address corresponds to the specified voice message transmission instruction, providing a signal through the communication medium (64) from the second voice message network sub-system (52) to the first voice message network sub-system (50) to enable processing of the telephonic voice message data in accordance with the specified voice message transmission instruction.

14. The method of Claim 13, in which the specified voice message transmission instruction includes transmitting the telephonic voice message data to a third voice message network sub-system having a third voice message address that is different from the destination voice message address, determining whether the origination voice message address is included in a first pre-selected set of at least one acceptable origin address and thereafter transmitting the telephonic voice message data to the destination voice message address only if the origination voice message address is included in the first pre-selected set, or determining whether the origination voice message address is included in a second pre-selected set of at least one unacceptable origin address and thereafter blocking transmission of the telephonic voice message data to the destination voice message address whenever the origination voice message address is included in the second pre-selected set.

15. The method of Claims 13 or 14, in which the specified voice message transmission instruction includes determining whether the origination voice message address

is included in a third pre-selected set of at least one address and thereafter either assigning the voice message data a delivery priority for establishing priority for retrieval of the voice message data from the destination voice message address whenever the origination voice address is included in the third pre-selected set or prohibiting the voice message data from being copied or forwarded.

16. The method of any one of Claims 13 to 15, in which at least one of the first and second voice message network sub-systems (50,52) includes an interface node (60,62) that provides data communication between the first and second voice message network sub-systems (50,52) to determine whether the destination voice message address corresponds to the specified voice message transmission instruction for controlling transmission of the telephonic voice message data.

17. The method of Claim 17 in which the determination of whether the destination voice message address corresponds to the specified voice message transmission instruction includes transmitting the destination voice message address from the first voice message network sub-system (50) to the interface node (60), determining whether the destination voice message address corresponds to the specified voice message transmission instruction, and seconding a query from the interface node (62) to the second voice message network sub-system (52) as to whether the destination voice message address corresponds to the specified voice message transmission instruction.

18. The method of Claim 13, in which the first and second voice message network sub-systems (50,52) include respective first and second interface nodes (60,62) that provide data communication between the first and second voice message network sub-systems (50,52), the first and second interface nodes (60,62) co-operating with the first and second voice message network sub-systems (50,52) to determine whether the destination voice message address corresponds to the specified voice message transmission instruction for controlling transmission of the telephonic voice message data.